

Abstract

A.D. Marble & Company of Conshohocken, Pennsylvania, conducted a Phase IB archaeological survey of eight parcels for the proposed SR 141 Centre Road Corridor Improvements project in Elsmere, New Castle County, Delaware. This study was performed in March and April 2005 for Johnson, Mirmiran and Thompson and the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT). The Phase I survey involved the excavation of shovel test pits within eight parcels. A geomorphological assessment of alluvial setting adjacent to Little Mill Creek was also performed as part of the Phase I survey. This assessment found no potential for precontact cultural deposits within the alluvial landforms adjacent to the creek. The Phase I archaeological testing identified no potentially significant archaeological resources within Parcels 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8. However, a potentially-significant scatter of prehistoric artifacts was identified within the eastern portion of Parcel 4. This site, designated as 7NC-E-175, was found on a low upland adjacent to a wetland that abuts Little Mill Creek. A total of eight precontact artifacts and four possible precontact artifacts were recovered from the site during the Phase I survey. This included one quartz flake that was found in a subsoil context.

At the conclusion of the Phase I survey, A.D. Marble & Company compiled a Phase I management summary report. This report recommended a Phase II investigation be conducted within the eastern portion of Parcel 4, which encompassed the primary area of prehistoric finds at 7NC-E-175. The report included a Phase II work plan. Both DelDOT and the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office (DESHPO) concurred with this recommendation.

In December 2005 and January 2006, A.D. Marble & Company of Conshohocken, Pennsylvania, conducted a Phase II archaeological investigation of 7NC-E-175. The Phase II investigation consisted of the excavation of 16 one square meter units across the site area. These units produced a total of 43 prehistoric additional artifacts. Only one temporally-diagnostic precontact artifact was recovered: a Woodland I projectile point. No pottery was found and no features were identified. Also, only one piece of fire-cracked rock (FCR) was recovered. Artifacts were found primarily in the upper historic/modern deposits, which were found to be disturbed. Artifact-bearing subsoil deposits were encountered in a small portion of the site. A total of 15 artifacts were found within the subsoil during the Phase II investigation.

The site was interpreted to be a fairly ephemeral procurement station, rather than an actual habitation or camp site. It is the opinion of A.D. Marble & Company that the site is not an eligible archaeological resource. This is primarily due to the lack of dateable contexts, such as features, the general absence of temporally-diagnostic artifacts, and the very low artifact density. No further work is recommended.